

## County Profile: Ocean

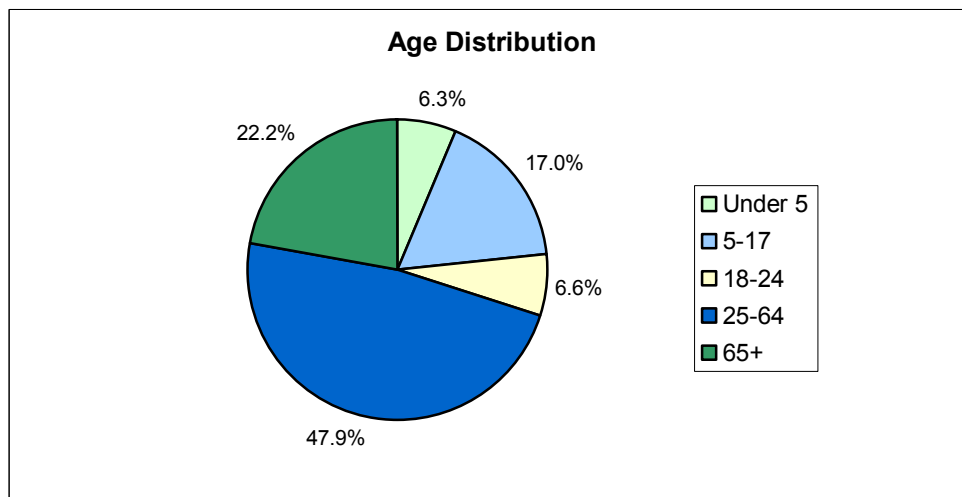


### General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 510,916 individuals reside in Ocean County's 33 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 636.28 square miles, making Ocean the second largest county in the state. It has a population density of 803 persons per square mile. Ocean County is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populous of the state's 21 counties.

At 17.9%, Ocean County had the second highest rate of growth from 1990 to 2000 in the state, and substantially more than the statewide average of 8.9%. However, eight municipalities experienced reductions in their population over the decade that ranged from -0.1% for Ocean Gate borough (total 2000 population – 2,076) to -18.1% for Lakehurst borough (total 2000 population – 2,522). Growth in the other 25 municipalities ranged from 1% for Bay Head Borough (total 2000 population – 1,238) to 69.1% for Stafford township (total 2000 population – 22,532).

Ocean County has 119,046 children under the age of 18. They comprise 23.3% of the county's total population and 5.7% of the state's child population. A total of 54.5% of Ocean County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 22.2% are 65 years and older. Ocean County has the highest proportion of persons 65 years and older and at 41, has the highest median age of the state's 21 counties, well above the statewide median of 36.7 years of age.



## ***Child Welfare***

Ocean County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is greater than the proportion of children residing in the county. While 5.7% of all children in New Jersey reside in Ocean County, 7.1%, or 2,751 of the child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect differ substantially from the state pattern. Compared to statewide percentages, a greater proportion of Ocean County referrals were made for neglect and a much smaller percentage of the referrals were for physical and sexual abuse. The percentage of neglect cases was the second highest in the state, while the proportion of cases involving physical abuse was the second lowest in the state. The rate of substantiated referrals is higher than the statewide rate.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001**

	Ocean County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical abuse	511	18.6	12,382	32.0
Emotional abuse	32	1.2	330	0.9
Sexual	75	2.7	2,179	5.6
Neglect	1,962	71.3	22,099	57.1
Multiple types	171	6.2	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	2,751	---	38,706	---
Substantiated rate per 1,000 children	5.3	---	4.0	---
Percent substantiated	23.0	---	21.8	---

In the Ocean County District Office, the active DYFS caseload is 2,196 children and 1,194 families. There are 341 in-state foster homes in Ocean County. There are 311 Ocean County children in foster care, which is 4% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and less than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Ocean County children in foster care, 40.8% reside in a different county than their family, which is less than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6% and the fourth lowest in the state.

From 1998 to 2002, out of a statewide total of 123 deaths of children as a result of abuse and neglect, there were six of children in Ocean County. Four of the families of these children had an open/active case with DYFS at the time of their death, one family's case had been closed and one family had been unknown to DYFS. The number of all infants who died in Ocean County in 2000 was 29, 4% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 4.4 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was lower than the statewide rate of 6.3.

## ***Child Welfare Outcome Measures***

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Ocean County is presented in the following table.<sup>1</sup> The data show a number of positive outcomes for children in foster

<sup>1</sup> See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

care in Ocean County. The incidence of abuse and neglect in foster care is slightly lower than the national standard (.56% vs. .57%). In addition, a smaller percentage of children in foster care in the Ocean County District Office re-enter care within 12 months of a prior placement (4.2% compared to a national standard of 8.6%). The percentage of cases in foster care for a year or less who had fewer than two placements is higher than the national standard (91.1% compared to 86.7%), and the third highest in the state.

At the same time, there are areas where Ocean County does not meet the national standard. The percent recurrence of maltreatment in foster care is substantially higher than the national standard (9.4% compared to 6.1%). A smaller percentage of children are reunified with a parent or caretaker within 12 months (65.7% compared to the national standard of 76.2%). Also, the percentage of cases exiting foster care for adoption leaving within 24 months was less than the national standard (23.5% compared to a national standard of 32%).

### 2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Ocean	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.4%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	.56%	.78%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	65.7%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	4.2%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	23.5%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	91.1%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

### Definitions

**Reduce recurrence of maltreatment** – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

**A/N incidence in foster care** – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

**Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry** – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

**Re-enter care within 12 months** – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

**Reduce time in foster care to adoption** – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

**Increase placement stability** – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

## **Data Sources**

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03  
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03  
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000  
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001  
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03  
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03  
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

2/17/04